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CU unlikely to 'disinvite' CIA, official says

By CHARLIE BRENNAN

Rocky Mountain News Boulder Bureau

BOULDER — A political activist group Monday called for University of Colorado officials to cancel a scheduled campus visit Nov. 18 by CIA recruiters, but a CU administrator said that probably won't happen.

"It isn't likely that the university will disinvite the recruiters," said Kaye Howe, vice chancellor for academic services.

"We did have a large number of students (about 140) who signed up to see the recruiters last year," she added. "They are independent, moral beings, and they can make those decisions for themselves."

Gordon Gray, director of career services at CU who is in charge of scheduling recruiters, echoed Howe.

"Our position continues as it was last spring," Gray said. "They are an agency of the U.S. government and a bona fide employer who is hiring and selecting on a legal basis. They are here as an employer and are welcome to be here."

Community in Action, the same group that coordinated mass protests in April that saw 478 arrests during a three-day CIA visit, also announced a petition drive calling for a "board of inquiry." The board would be composed of students, staff and faculty and would make a binding decision about the desirability of spy agency recruiters on campus.

"Allowing the CIA the use of university facilities for recruitment purposes has nothing to do with furthering the reputation of the university as a center of free speech and scholarly inquiry," said Kevin Harris, a member of the group.

"It actually contradicts that mission and that reputation. It implicates the university as a party to the many crimes the CIA commits."

But Howe said Harris' proposed board of inquiry is likely to never see the light of day.

"I don't think it would be appropriate for the university to

name such a board," she said. "I don't like the idea of someone determining university-approved political ideas, and it seems to me this is going in a direction that would be unwise."

At Monday's press conference, Harris and four colleagues vowed that protesters' activities would be escalated from last year's peaceful protest if the CIA visit is not canceled and if the board of inquiry is not empaneled.

For three days beginning April 9, Willard Hall was besieged by singing and chanting protesters who called for the arrests of CIA recruiters inside.

Instead, 478 arrests were made of protesters, many of whom were arrested as many as three times.

Charges against all those arrested were dropped, however, when Boulder District Attorney Alex Hunter determined that there had been no violence or property damage and that processing every case would needlessly burden a crowded court system.